

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2046

UNCLAS LA PAZ 6603

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EMIN, BL

SUBJECT: BOLIVIAN REQUEST FOR EMBASSY/USG/SUPPORT OF IBRD

LOAN FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY OF NONMETALLIC POTENTIAL
OF BOLIVIAN SALT LAKES.

1. SUBSECRETARY BOLIVIAN MINISTRY OF MINES ARMANDO URIOSTE IS TRAVELING TO WASHINGTON AUGUST 20 FOR DISCUSSIONS ABOUT AND SIGNING OF IBRD LOAN TO MINING SECTOR. GOB HAS DECIDED TO ASK FOR AN ADDITION TO THE LOAN TO COVER COST OF FEASIBILITY STUDY OF NOMETALLIC POTENTIAL OF BOLIVIA'S ALTIPLANO SALT LAKES THE HIGHEST OF WHICH ARE; SALAR DE UYUNI, COIPASA AND EXPEXA. INTEREST IN NONMETALLIC POTENTIAL OF SALT LAKES WAS AWAKENED BY RECENT DISCOVERY OF LITHIUM IN SALAR DE UYUNI (SEE STATE 152773). OTHER ELEMENTS ALSO IDENTIFIED ARE MAGNESIUM AND POTASSIUM. OTHER SALT LAKES ARE KNOWN TO CONTAIN SODIUM CARBONATE, SODIUM SULPHATE, BORAX AND OTHERS. SUBSEC-RETARY HAS ASKED EMBASSY/USG TO SUPPORT THEIR PROPOSED REQUEST TO IBRD FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO COVER SUBJECT FEASIBILITY STUDY.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES THE GOB REQUEST IS REASONABLE. IBRD AMONG OTHERS HAS BEEN AFTER GOB TO DIVERSIFY ITS MINERAL PRODUCTION AND THIS WOULD PROVIDE EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR BOLIVIA TO MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION. INTEREST IN LITHIUM AND POTASSIUM HAVE
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ALREADY BEEN SHOWN BY TWO AMERICAN COMPANIES WHO

HAVE VISITED BOLIVIA SINCE LITHIUM DISCOVERY IN
SALAR DE UYUNI WAS MADE PUBLIC. FURTHER DETAILS ON
POTENTIAL OF SALAR DE UYUNI AND OTHER SALT LAKES
WILL BECOME KNOWN WHEN BOLIVIAN-US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
TEAM DOES ADDITIONAL SAMPLING IN SALAR IN MID
SEPTEMBER (SEE STATE 196185).

3. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED AT
APPROPRIATE TIME TO EXPRESS USG SUPPORT FOR THE
GOB'S APPROACH TO IBRD FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY FINANCING.
STEDMAN

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